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Tuesday, 6 December 2011, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Alzate
	France	Mr. Briens
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

First report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2001 (2011) (S/2011/736)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

First report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2001 (2011) (S/2011/736)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/736, which contains the first report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2001 (2011).

I now give the floor to Mr. Kobler. Since this is Mr. Kobler's first appearance before the Security Council, I should like to extend him a particularly warm welcome and wish him success in his work.

Mr. Kobler: It is a great pleasure and an honour for me to be here today. I would like to thank you, Sir, for having invited me to introduce the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/736) on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and to brief the Council on the latest developments in that country.

I am also grateful for the Secretary-General's decision, with your support, to entrust me with the responsibility of leading the activities of the United Nations in Iraq at a particularly historic moment. Like my predecessors, I look forward to fulfilling the mandate this Council has entrusted to UNAMI, in close cooperation with the Iraqi authorities. In that regard, I would like to express my deep and sincere appreciation to Iraqi leaders for their warm and cordial welcome and interaction thus far.

Let me begin by condemning in the strongest possible terms yesterday's terrorist attack on Ashura pilgrims, which killed dozens and injured many more. My condolences go to the families of the victims. Iraqi religious and ethnic diversity is the ultimate strength of the country. That diversity is at the heart of the country's efforts to establish a peaceful, prosperous and all-inclusive society.

It has been almost two months since I took up my assignment in Iraq — a country I left four years ago in a different capacity and under very different circumstances. Since my arrival, I have met with many Arab and Kurdish political and religious leaders, including in Najaf, to take the pulse of the country. I have visited all UNAMI hubs in Erbil, Kirkuk and Basra to better familiarize myself with the activities of the Mission and of the United Nations country team. Finally, on 23 and 24 November I travelled to Kuwait to discuss the outstanding issues and points of common interest between Iraq and Kuwait.

During that initial period, I must say that I witnessed a great number of changes and improvements, and despite many obstacles ahead there is significant degree of good will and determination to achieve further progress. Yet, I also came to realize that some of the pressing challenges of yesterday remain the same today. They are covered in greater detail in the report of the Secretary-General, and include wealth distribution, power-sharing, delivery and access to basic services, strained relations between communities that have lived together in Iraq for centuries, and unresolved issues between Iraq and Kuwait.

Today, I would like to focus on the following five areas: first, the significance of the withdrawal of United States forces from Iraq for the Iraqi people and the United Nations; secondly, the current political situation; thirdly, United Nations activities on the ground; fourthly, the possible impact in Iraq of events unfolding in the region and the state of affairs between Iraq and Kuwait; and last but not least, the issue of Camp Ashraf, which has monopolized much of the attention and efforts of UNAMI and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) attention over the past several months.

The withdrawal of the United States forces from Iraq by the end of the year will lead to a remarkable change for the Government and the people of Iraq. It

will also be an important milestone in Iraq's history as the country rebuilds and strengthens its relations with regional and international partners. Yes, there will be challenges ahead and many seem concerned by what the future may entail. However, it is above all an opportunity for all Iraqis to prove to themselves and to the world that they can build a peaceful and better future for their children, and an opportunity for all political leaders and elected official to respond to the legitimate aspirations of their constituencies and bring democracy, political stability and economic prosperity forward.

UNAMI and the United Nations country team stand ready to work with the Government and redouble its efforts to consolidate the country's democratic gains and economic recovery. The United Nations has a proven track record in assisting to build up strong institutions and mechanisms for good governance, including in the fight against corruption. I am pleased that Prime Minister Al-Maliki himself has made this topic one of his Government's priorities. I look forward to building upon the work that has already been done, especially with regard to human rights and electoral and legislative support, all of which could contribute to fostering political stability in the years to come.

The task ahead should not be underestimated and will require further progress on the security front. For several months now, the Iraqi security forces have assumed full control of the security of the country. However, they continue to face armed opposition and terrorist groups carrying out complex mass-casualty attacks that affect the lives of hundreds of citizen across the country. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General, they also pose significant challenges to the delivery of United Nations assistance on the ground.

Let me now turn to the latest political developments. As Iraq makes further progress in regaining its rightful place in the community of nations, it is even more crucial that its leaders from all sides work collectively to overcome their differences and promote confidence and tolerance. In my consultations, in particular with Kurdish interlocutors, I have sensed a growing discontent at delays in fully implementing the Kurdish-Arab agenda. As called for by the Secretary-General in his report, Iraqi leaders should take the steps necessary to overcome the current stand still in the appointment of security ministers and to resolve other pending issues regarding the Government formation process.

Arab-Kurd relations and issues pertaining to disputed internal boundaries have always been at the core of UNAMI's mandate. They represent a major element in the country's stability and remain one of UNAMI's top priorities. I am pleased that Prime Minister Al-Maliki has asked me for UNAMI's continued involvement and assistance on this matter. To this end, we are currently exploring ways to reinvigorate the standing consultative mechanism as a forum for addressing the issues of the disputed internal boundaries through dialogue.

I have already initiated discussions with all concerned on the issue of Kirkuk, including holding elections and improving security, and a possible third-party role for UNAMI in the combined security mechanism. The recent deployment of the Iraqi Army around the Kirkuk airport was viewed with concern by leaders of the Kurdistan Regional Government and further underlined the need to ensure that the necessary mechanisms are in place for settling disputes. In this regard, I call upon the parties involved to use existing mechanisms to avoid confrontation and to provide the necessary space for UNAMI to assist.

After the withdrawal of the United States forces from Iraq, it will be of particular importance that democratic standards, including respect for the rule of law in relation to electoral processes and human rights, be safeguarded and further advanced. There must be no rollback.

The transparency and professionalism of future electoral processes are essential to ensuring that Iraqi citizens accept the results. Iraq has a busy electoral calendar ahead, for which a professional and independent electoral commission is essential. The appointment of the new Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission, to be completed by April 2012, will be the foundation of the credibility of all upcoming elections. I am pleased to report that the Council of Representatives has formally requested UNAMI to perform an advisory role in the selection process of the next Board of Commissioners.

I turn now to the situation of human rights. Much has still to be done to address the difficulties faced by all Iraqis in their daily lives. Every month, an average of 600 to 800 incidents, resulting in at least 10 civilian deaths per day and many more injuries, continue to be

reported. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the victims of these atrocious acts, and I call on the Government of Iraq to do everything in its power to protect the victims of violence and to ensure that those who perpetrate such acts are held accountable according to law.

More specifically, the confirmed recent killing of a human rights activist by an improvised explosive device attached to his car in Kirkuk on 20 November brings the number of reported violent incidents against human rights defenders to 11 since the beginning of October. Of equal concern are attempts against freedom of expression — a fundamental right in all democracies. During the reporting period, journalists continued to be the targets of attacks. UNAMI's Office of Human Rights continues, together with the Government of Iraq, to follow up each and every individual case. They will be included in the Mission's upcoming regular report on the situation of human rights in Iraq.

On the development side, the United Nations country team's partnership with the Government continues in the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The Government's efforts to allocate a specific line of funding for development projects within its investment budget for 2012 demonstrate its commitment to supporting the country's key development priorities. The United Nations stands ready to provide the Government with support in implementing those priorities.

With respect to integrated development priorities, UNAMI will in the coming months focus on three issues with political, security and governance implications: youth, water resource management and environment. I strongly believe that these provide opportunities for a cross-cutting impact across Iraq's critical development challenges. They are at the core of Iraq's potential to realize sustainable development and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

I would also like to focus on question of improving the situation of women. Specifically, I will focus my efforts on three priority activities: first, promoting the participation of women and their role in building Iraq's sustainable and peaceful future; secondly, combating all forms of violence against women and girls; and thirdly, promoting education for women and girls, including vocational training.

Democratic and economic development can prosper only in a stable regional environment and Iraq's stability depends on good-relations with its neighbours. Those relations, however, could be significantly affected by various unfolding events in the region.

As mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General, tensions escalated in northern Iraq following the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) terrorist attacks on 19 October against Turkish forces in the south-eastern province of Hakkari, which resulted in the deplorable loss of 24 lives and led to subsequent air and ground offensives by Turkish forces against PKK terrorists in Iraqi Kurdistan. Despite that difficult situation, the Governments of Turkey and Iraq, together with the Kurdistan Regional Government authorities, have proactively engaged in constructive crisis management. To date, those mitigating efforts have proven successful, and I would like to thank all concerned for those efforts.

As one can easily imagine, unfolding events in Syria are of concern to many of my interlocutors, who fear possible repercussions in Iraq. A contingency plan has been prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with a view to addressing any movement of population into Iraq and is being regularly updated to take into consideration the fluid situation in Syria.

Of particular importance are the relations between Iraq and Kuwait. Both countries share a difficult past. The 2009 report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/385) envisaged a road map for the normalization of Iraq's international status. There has been, however, little progress. In my recent discussions with the Iraqi Government, I have encouraged them to quickly implement Iraq's outstanding Chapter VII obligations, as outlined in that road map. That in turn would open the door for the early normalization of Iraq's status in the international community by the Security Council, which is now long overdue.

Further efforts are therefore needed to promote confidence between the two countries and facilitate solutions to deal with outstanding bilateral issues. I am encouraged by the resolve that both Iraq and Kuwait have demonstrated to improve bilateral relations, particularly through reciprocal high-level visits earlier this year and the establishment of a Joint Ministerial Working Committee. I hope that following the

forthcoming visit of Prime Minister al-Maliki to Kuwait, the two sides will be able to resume the work of the Joint Ministerial Working Committee in the near future.

During my recent meetings with Iraqi leaders, I was encouraged by the goodwill they have expressed towards improving relations with Kuwait. Similarly, during my recent visit to Kuwait, I was encouraged by the goodwill towards Iraq shown by my Kuwaiti interlocutors. While reiterating the importance they attached to a letter from Prime Minister al-Maliki reaffirming Iraq's land and maritime borders, in accordance with resolution 833 (1993), they responded positively to my suggestion that the focus for the time being should be on the implementation of Iraq's Chapter VII obligations on a priority basis, for example, border management projects, maintenance, and compensation and relocation of farmers.

I believe that UNAMI is well placed to help normalize Iraq's relations with Kuwait in the framework of concerted United Nations engagement and with the support of the Security Council. UNAMI and I, personally, stand ready to assist, including by exploring new avenues to address the standstill between the two countries and facilitate progress towards Iraq's full compliance with, and eventual exit from, Chapter VII, while providing Kuwait with the necessary safeguards and assurances it is looking for.

I would now like to draw the Council's attention to the situation with regard to Camp Ashraf, which remains a matter of great concern. The Government of Iraq has asked the United Nations to help facilitate a peaceful and durable solution to the matter, and we are making an exhaustive effort to do so. We believe that such a solution is possible. However, the positions of the Government of Iraq and of the Camp residents and their leadership continue to remain far apart.

The Government of Iraq repeatedly emphasized its intention to close down the camp by 31 December of this year and to transfer its residents to another location until countries are found outside Iraq where they can resettle. That deadline is fast approaching.

The position of Camp Ashraf residents is to remain in the camp until countries are found to receive them. They still do not agree to be transferred to a new location outside the camp without the protection of Blue Helmets.

I am pleased by the progress made so far and by the Government of Iraq's agreement to allow UNHCR to play the role it has under its mandate. The Government of Iraq is also committed to the principle of non-refoulement and gave assurances to the Secretary-General of its commitment to find a peaceful solution. There is, however, a real danger of confrontation and even violence unless a mutually acceptable solution is found. We are therefore calling on all concerned to act with restraint and flexibility to ensure that such a peaceful solution can be found.

The United Nations efforts are being led on the ground by UNAMI and UNHCR. Those efforts have intensified in recent weeks in the context of a working group on Camp Ashraf, which has been meeting frequently with the Government of Iraq. UNAMI continues its regular visits to Camp Ashraf, the most recent of which took place this past weekend. Those visits provide the opportunity to listen to the concerns of the residents and to brief them on the proposals being discussed.

The Secretary-General has spoken personally to Prime Minister al-Maliki to appeal for flexibility and full support for the United Nations efforts to facilitate the peaceful solution the Government has assured that it seeks. He has asked me to attach the highest priority to that issue.

In trying to facilitate a solution, we are emphasizing a number of important points. First, we must keep in mind that lives are at stake and must be protected. The Government has a responsibility to ensure the safety, security and welfare of the residents. Any forced action that results in bloodshed or loss of life would be both ill-advised and unacceptable.

Secondly, we believe that any workable solution must be acceptable to both the Government of Iraq and to the residents of Camp Ashraf. A solution must respect Iraqi sovereignty, on the one hand, and applicable international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law on the other hand.

Thirdly, a solution must also respect the principle of non-refoulement. No resident of Camp Ashraf should be returned to his or her home country without his or her consent.

While some progress has been made in our latest discussions in Baghdad, many obstacles remain to arriving at a plan that would meet the concerns and

requirements of all interested parties. Subject to all conditions being met, UNHCR is ready to begin the verification and interviews for the purposes of refugee status determination. However, the process will take time to complete. Clearly, the situation cannot be fully resolved before 31 December. I therefore appeal to the Government of Iraq to extend the deadline in order to permit adequate time and space for a solution to be found.

I also appeal to the leadership and residents of Camp Ashraf to engage constructively and with an open mind to the proposed process. They should give serious consideration to the proposals under discussion. There should be no provocation or violence from their side nor a challenge to Iraqi sovereignty.

Finally, I appeal to the international community to do more to help. A lasting solution cannot be found unless Governments step forward and offer to accept Camp Ashraf residents for resettlement in their countries. I will be travelling to Brussels today and will emphasize that point, in particular with my interlocutors there. In that context, I also welcome the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to receive those residents of Camp Ashraf who express a desire to voluntarily return to their home country with the assurance that their welfare, security and safety will be respected.

Let me say that the situation of Camp Ashraf is a complex one but that the problems are not insurmountable. A process is under way, and if all concerned act responsibly at this time, it will be possible to arrive at a peaceful, durable solution that respects both the safety, security and welfare of Camp residents and Iraq's understandable desire to assert its sovereignty.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the members of the Security Council for their continued support. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation for the security support provided to the United Nations by the Government of Iraq and the Member States contributing troops and police to UNAMI.

Finally, I would also like to pay tribute to the United Nations national and international staff who work in Iraq, under the most challenging circumstances. I am confident that with their determination and the support of the Council, we can achieve more in Iraq, in line with our mandate. I appreciate, in this context, the openness of all my interlocutors and their stated expectation to see the United Nations engaging with the people and the Government of Iraq to consolidate the significant gains made thus far.

The President: I thank Mr. Kobler for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the repre ative of Iraq.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to thank the previous President of the Council, the Permanent Representative of Portugal, for his efforts during the month of November. I also congratulate Mr. Martin Kobler on his assignment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Iraq, and I wish him success in his new position. In addition, I thank Mr. Kobler and his team in Baghdad and New York for their sincere efforts in helping the Government and the people of Iraq.

After reviewing the important points mentioned in the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (S/2011/736), my country's delegation would like to address the following issues.

The political and security situation in Iraq has witnessed tremendous and notable improvements in the past few months. The coming year will bring great challenges and responsibilities for the Iraqi Government after the United States forces withdrawal by the end of this year. However, the strategic framework agreement between Iraq and the United States will underpin the next stage of the relations between the two countries at the political, economic, technical, cultural, and scientific levels.

Here I would like to take this opportunity to thank the United States forces and the United States Government and all the countries that have helped Iraq to bring about democracy, human rights, the rule of law and stability in the country. As Mr. Kobler noted, some of yesterday's challenges are still the same today for Iraq and the Iraqi Government.

Regarding the implementation of the status-of-forces agreement between the United States and Iraq, on 1 October the United States air force transferred control over the Iraqi airspace in the Baghdad/Balad sector to the Iraqi Civil Aviation Authority. All air traffic in this area, which is the busiest and most

complicated in Iraq, is now conducted by Iraqi air-traffic controllers. With this step, Iraq has assumed complete control over its airspace, for the first time since 2003. Iraq also took over control of 485 military bases from United States forces as part of the plan for a complete withdrawal by the end of the year.

I would like to inform the Security Council that my Government has worked hard in recent months to improve its defensive capabilities to stand against terrorist attacks, to protect internal security and to save democracy in Iraq. In this context, I would like to point to Mr. Kobler's praise of the improvements in the security situation in Iraq, which are in line with the perceptions of the United Nations about the future of Iraq through 2015.

As part of the successes achieved by the Iraqi security forces since they took charge of security duties in the country, a statement by the Ministry of Health showed that the number of civilians who were killed in acts of violence had decreased to 110 in September 2011, compared with 155 in August 2011. That number represents the second-lowest number of casualties in the space of a month for this year; this shows clearly the huge decrease in violent attacks, which reached their peak in 2006 and 2007.

The Government of Iraq affirms that the duty of officials in all Government sectors is to meet the demands of citizens using all of the capabilities of the Government. Although the Government inherited a bad situation and a heavy burden of debt from the former regime, it is working to alleviate the burden on citizens and to provide them with the best possible services.

The General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers in Iraq and the United Nations Development Programme launched the United Nations Global Compact in Iraq on 15 October 2011. The agreement is aimed at empowering the private sector through sustainable collaboration based on the principles of human rights, a sustainable environment and business transparency.

The Iraqi Government is moving forward to solve the electricity crisis in Iraq through a plan that is being implemented at a steady pace. In addition, the Government has taken a number of urgent measures aimed at relieving the intensity of the crisis until a final solution is reached. Those urgent measures include the distribution of additional quantities of fuel to a number of sub-generator units in order to provide a relative level of comfort to citizens, especially during the summer.

My Government asserts that the oil is the property of all Iraqi citizens, and that the duty of the Government is to invest this energy in a way that provides the best return for citizens. In this context, the Southern Gas Company signed an agreement in principle with the Shell and Mitsubishi oil companies on 22 October 2011 to establish a joint company to benefit from the natural gas associated with oil in the province of Basra. That step was taken after decades of wasting the natural gas wealth associated with oil.

The Iraqi oil industry maintained its monthly production levels; crude-oil exports for the month of September 2011 totalled 63.1 million barrels, with average daily exports of 2.1 million barrels. The Oil Ministry is currently aiming to increase its production levels to 2.9 million barrels a day in order to reach this year's goal, which is 3 million barrels a day.

Iraq is witnessing today a new era in which the foundations of democracy, personal and private freedoms, freedom of the press and expression, the freedom to create political parties, political diversity and a peaceful transition of power are being established. We in Iraq are also working to strengthen the foundations of the culture of human rights in all sectors, so as to ensure that all Iraqis, from different ethnic, religious and sectarian backgrounds, enjoy their basic rights as stated in the Constitution.

As part of the efforts made by the Iraqi Government to determine the fate of missing victims in mass graves, the Ministry of Human Rights is preparing, in collaboration with the Institute of Forensic Medicine and the Martyrs Association, to launch a national campaign in all Iraqi provinces and the Kurdistan region aimed at establishing a national database for victims in mass graves using DNA samples to identify them. In that context, on 24 October the Ministry of Human Rights signed a memorandum of understanding with the Institute of Forensic Medicine and the Martyrs Association to establish an organizational structure in order to begin the process of identifying victims in mass graves.

The Iraqi Government has endeavoured to assist social groups that are less fortunate, especially the disabled. The Ministry of Human Rights announced its readiness to hold training sessions in sign language at

Iraqi national institutions in order to support the deaf and enable them to perform their role in society.

The Iraqi Government is also endeavouring to spread and establish the culture of human rights. The National Institute of Human Rights, along with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, organized, on 18 October 2011, an advanced training session for human rights professors at Mosul University.

The Iraqi Minister of Human Rights stated, during his meeting with Mr. Francisco Mota, Director of the Human Rights Office of UNAMI, on 12 October 2011, that the Ministry was conducting regular visits to detention centres and prisons. Those visits are welcomed by the Office of the Prime Minister and the Supreme Judicial Council. The Minister also expressed the Ministry's readiness to arrange for joint visits with the UNAMI Human Rights Office to Iraqi detention centres and prisons to evaluate the human rights situation there. For his part, Mr. Mota pointed out that he had contacted Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch to view the reports that they had issued, and he stressed the need for the statistics and information included therein to be accurate.

The political changes and reform movement that began within the context of the Arab Spring prove, without any doubt, that we have selected the correct political process in Iraq since 2003. They also prove that Iraq has been a pioneer in achieving political change and in adopting democracy through elections and the peaceful transfer of power as a process for political life in the new Iraq.

Iraq asserts the importance of holding the Arab Summit Conference in Baghdad on the designated date at the end of March next year, as we have completed all the preparations and finished all the necessary projects for holding the Summit. My Government believes that it is the time to hold the Arab Summit because it is very important to the Arab world after the changes that have taken place in the region. That imposes a duty on Iraq, in line with its leading role, to face the changes in the region in order to find appropriate Arab solutions to deal with the situation in a way that meets the aspirations and hopes of the Arab people.

The Government of Iraq, based on its deep belief in people's right to express aspirations and choose their legitimate representatives, voted on 16 September in favour of the General Assembly resolution that accepts the credential documents of the Libyan National Transitional Council as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people to the United Nations (General Assembly resolution 66/1). That was preceded by my Government's recognition of the Libyan National Transitional Council as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people.

I would like to point out that the Council of Ministers, as part of its support for the democratic changes in the region, issued a decision at its meeting on 19 October to send a delegation from the Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission to Tunisia, headed by Mr. Faraj Al-Haidary, Chair of the Board of Commissioners of the Commission, to express solidarity with the Tunisian people in their elections. The Council of Ministers also decided to provide $1 million as a contribution to the success of that election.

Despite the challenges that it faces, Iraq is committed to its humanitarian role in the world in times of disasters and crises. That was reflected in the Iraqi Government's decision to donate $10 million to help the victims of the earthquake in Japan and by its decision of 25 August to donate 22,500 tons of wheat and $5 million to support the efforts of the Somali Government in fighting the effects of drought and hunger in the Horn of Africa. My Government also donated $2 million to finance the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Iraq is committed to respecting the sovereignty of neighbouring countries and to not allowing the use of Iraqi territories to attack neighbouring countries. In that regard, I would like to point out the statement of the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 20 October that denounced the terrorist attacks by armed groups affiliated with the Kurdish Workers Party on Turkish towns near the Iraqi border. At the same time, the Iraqi authorities condemn the bombardment by Turkish and Iranian forces of Kurdish villages on the border of the two countries, which caused civilian causalities.

We would like to affirm that Iraq is committed to solving all unresolved issues with our neighbour Kuwait. I would like to assure the Council that there is positive collaboration between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti Governments to settle all unresolved issues between the two countries that were the result of Saddam

Hussein's aggression against Kuwait and his invasion in 1990. As Mr. Kobler said, he was encouraged by the goodwill of the two countries. I reaffirm my country's commitment to resolving the remaining issues under the framework of the related resolutions adopted by the Security Council. I also affirm that the relationship between Iraq and Kuwait is developing positively.

In that context, I would like to point out the approval in August by the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers to establish a committee to coordinate efforts regarding the Kuwaiti national archives. The committee is chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and its membership comprises representatives of the Council of Ministers, the Ministries of Defence, Interior, Finance, Justice, Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Central Bank of Iraq.

Regarding the port of Mubarak, we assert that we are dealing with the issue of the port through official channels and collaboration with the Kuwaiti side. I would like to point out that Prime Minister of Iraq Nuri al-Maliki announced his acceptance of an invitation from the Kuwaiti Prime Minister, Sheikh Naser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, and stated that he intended to visit Kuwait this month. However, the visit was postponed after the resignation of the Kuwaiti Prime Minister.

We affirm that Iraq has achieved great progress in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, resulting in the adoption of resolution 1957 (2010), which lifted all restrictions and sanctions imposed on Iraq after the invasion of Kuwait. That has paved the way for Iraq to return to the international community. That was affirmed by the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons during his meeting with Mr. Hoshyhar Zebari, Foreign Minister of Iraq, in The Hague on 7 September, when he stated that he valued the complete cooperation of Iraq in fulfilling its obligations as a member of the Organisation. He also affirmed the cooperation of the competent Iraqi authorities to close the file on weapons of mass destruction. He expressed his appreciation of Iraq's supportive and positive role in getting rid of such weapons.

I would also like to mention the successful visit by the inspection team of the Technical Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons from 1 to 5 May, the assertion of the head of the inspection team of the success of the visit at all levels and his praise of Iraq's flexibility.

I would also like to mention the letter dated 3 December 2011, sent by Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari to the Secretary-General and, through him, to the members of the Security Council, regarding the steps taken by Iraq to implement its obligations under resolution 1957 (2010). In that letter, Mr. Zebari mentioned decision No. 119 of the Council of Ministers, dated 12 April, to approve the first stage of the removal process for the decommissioned Al-Muthanna facility, which was used by Saddam Hussein's regime to produce chemical weapons. The Council of Ministers also designated approximately $5 million for the project. The letter also discussed Iraq's outstanding cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection team.

With regard to Camp Ashraf, which was addressed in detail by Mr. Kobler, I would like to assure the Security Council that my Government does not want to force anyone to return to Iran. Moreover, we believe that approximately 900 of the residents hold dual nationality. We very much encourage them to go back to the countries of which they hold the nationality. The relocation decision, which will be implemented by the end of the year, will help the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to interview the people in the camp and to decide of their own free will what they intend to do.

With the camp residents preventing the Iraqi forces and Government from entering, we do not know exactly what is going on. That is Iraq's sovereignty. There is no country in the world that, with respect to sovereignty, allows people to be in the country without that country's authority. However, we believe that we need the help of the countries and members of the Security Council to assist us in taking some of the residents of the camp so that we can conclude this issue once and for all. According to our Constitution, we cannot allow any group inside Iraq that attacks neighbouring countries. That will cause great problems.

In conclusion, I would like to affirm my Government's appreciation for the role performed by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and for the efforts of the Special Representative in providing the support requested by the Iraqi Government, in

accordance with the mechanisms agreed upon by the two parties.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.